

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 05045 01 OF 02 260639Z

ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

EB-08 /073 W

-----122746 260642Z /11

R 251206Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8561

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 05045

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, IR

SUBJ: RUMORED MINISTERIAL CHANGES

SUMMARY: NUMBER OF STORIES SUGGEST SEVERAL MINISTERS WILL BE CHANGED WITHIN NEXT TWO MONTHS. MORE VAGUE RUMORS SUGGEST PRIME MINISTER MAY BE IN JEOPARDY. MINOR CABINET CHANGES SEEM MOST LIKELY TO USE. END SUMMARY.

1. NUMBER OF EVENTS OVER PAST MONTH HAVE COMBINED TO CONVINCE MANY INDIVIDUALS THAT AT LEAST CABINET CHANGES AND PERHAPS CHANGE IN PRIME MINISTER MAY BE FORTHCOMING OVER NEXT TWO MONTHS OR SO. UNREST IN CITIES AND PERSISTENT RUMORS THAT AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI WILL RETURN TO IRAN HAVE BEEN PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS GIVING RISE TO THESE STORIES.

2. KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES SUGGEST THAT MINISTER OF HEALTH SHEIKHOLESLAMZADEH IS ON THE WAY OUT. HIS DISMISSAL HAS BEEN RUMORED FOR MONTHS AND SPECULATION ON A SUCCESSOR HAS BEEN STEADY FOR SOME TIME. RECENT REVELATIONS REGARDING HEALTH MINISTER'S INCOMPETENCE IN DEALING WITH HOSPITAL SITUATION SUGGEST HE IS INDEED ON THE WAY OUT.

3. MINISTER OF COMMERCE KHOSROWSHAHI HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN UNHAPPY WITH GOI RULES REGARDING DIVESTITURE OF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 05045 01 OF 02 260639Z

PRIVATE INTERESTES AND EVEN PRIME MINISTER HAS CONFIDED PRIVATELY THAT KHOSROSHAHI WILL BE LEAVING THE CABINET SHORTLY. HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE TRIED TO RESIGN TWICE PREVIOUSLY.

4. IN THE MORE SPECULATIVE CATEGORIES ARE THE RUMORED DEPARTURES OF INTERIOR MINISTER NASR-ESFAHANI AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION HOMAYOUN. NASR-ESFAHANI WOULD REPORTEDLY

BE PICKED AS A SCAPEGOAT FOR POLICE DIFFICULTIES IN HANDLING RECENT DEMONSTRATORS. EMBASSY DOES NOT, HOWEVER, BELIEVE HIS DEPARTURE IS IMMINENT AND BELIEVES GOI, AS IT DID IN CASE OF TABRIZ RIOTS, WILL SEEK SCAPEGOATS MORE DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH RIOT CONTROL INADEQUACIES. PRESS HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN UNHAPPY WITH HOMAYOUN FOR SOME TIME. HOWEVER, GIVEN HIS CONNECTIONS, HIS DEPARTURE WOULD REPORTEDLY TAKE THE FORM OF A PROMOTION INTO ANOTHER JOB NOT CONNECTED DIRECTLY WITH GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION. MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED JOB IS THAT OF SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE RESURGENCE PARTY.

5. PRIME MINISTER'S SITUATION OVER PAST MONTH HAS COME MILDLY INTO QUESTION. OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF EDUCATED IRANIANS SEE HIS ADMINISTRATION AS PERHAPS TECHNICALLY COMPETENT BUT POLITICALLY INADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS CREATED BY RELIGIOUS DEMONSTRATORS. WHETHER THIS IS CAUSE OR EFFECT OF RUMORS CONCERNING AMBASSADOR ZAHEDI'S RETURN TO IRAN IS DIFFICULT TO SAY. IN ANY EVENT RECENT CRITICISMS OF RESURGENCE PARTY IN PRESS AND PRIVATELY COULD BE CONSTRUED AS OBLIQUE ATTACKS ON PRIME MINISTER. WHILE AMOUZEGAR HAS NEVER POLITICALLY BEEN TAGGED WITH ANY RESPONSIBILITY ARISING OUT OF ADMINISTRATIVE FAILURE TO HANDLE TABRIZ RIOTS, FACT THAT HIS UNCLE WAS SACKED AS EAST AZERBAIJAN GOVERNOR GENERAL HAS NOT BEEN MISSED. BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT MANY IRANIANS PERCEIVE THAT GOI
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEHRAN 05045 01 OF 02 260639Z

MUST MIX MORE IN POLITICAL ARENA AND BECOME MORE SKILLFUL AT BALANCING VARIOUS GROUPS. IRONIC FEATURE OF THIS IS THAT AMOUZEGAR WOULD HAVE MADE EXCELLENT PRIME MINISTER 2-3 YEARS AGO WHEN SUCH POLITICAL ACTIVITY WAS NOT CONTEMPLATED BY GOVERNMENT.

6. NIOC CHAIRMAN HOUSHANG ANSARY LEADS DISCUSSION AS POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO AMOUZEGAR. MANY PEOPLE, HOWEVER, REGARD ANSARY AS A BIT OF A THIEF AND NOT SOLID ENOUGH FOR PRIME MINISTER'S JOB. MANY MORE REGARD HIM AS BRIGHTEST MAN IN GOI. CONFIDENTIAL SOURCES INVOLVED IN POLITICAL BROKERING BETWEEN DISSIDENT GROUPS AND GOVERNMENT SUGGEST WHAT IRAN NEEDS IS SOLID STATESMAN, RESPECTED ON ALL SIDES. WHILE NOT RULING OUT POSSIBILITY HOVEYDA MIGHT BE PUSHED BACK INTO PRIME MINISTERSHIP, THOUGHTS RANGE RATHER TOWARD SOMEONE SUCH AS CHIEF OF SHAH'S SPECIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 05045 02 OF 02 260647Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
EB-08 /073 W

-----122797 260649Z /11

R 251206Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8562

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 05045

BUREAU, GENERAL NASTRATOLLAH MOINIAN OR GENERAL HOSSEIN FARDOUST, CHIEF OF THE IMPEIAL INSPECTORATE. MOINIAN RECEIVED HIGH MARKS IN MOST SECTORS FOR HIS DEFT HANDLING OF IMPERIAL COMMISSION ON WASTE AND CORRUPTION AND BOTH HAVE EXHIBITED POLITICAL SKILLS IN PAST. WHILE MOINIAN HAS POPULAR FOLLOWING AS RESULT OF IMPERIAL COMMISSION WORK, FARDOUST DOES NOT. FROM PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE, SELECTION OF GENERAL AS PRIME MINISTER MIGHT SEEM TO STRIKE DISCORDANT NOTE IN TERMS OF "POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION". HOWEVER, BOTH HAVE RESPECT OF BUREAUCRACY (AND SECURITY FORCES) AS WELL AS SUBSTANTIAL SEGMENTS OF PRIVATE SECTOR. THIS MIGHT COMMEND ITSELF TO SHAH, WHO IS CONCERNED WITH KEEPING MORE HARD LINE ELEMENTS OF GOI IN LINE WITH POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. APPOINTMENT OF GEN. SHAFAQAT AS EAST AZARBAIJAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR AFTER TABRIZ RIOTS SUGGESTS POSSIBLE PRECEDENT.

7. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE SHAH PLANS MAJOR CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT, I.E. SHIFT OF PRIME MINISTERS, IN THE ABSENCE OF SOME POLITICAL DISASTER WHICH WOULD MAKE SUCH CHANGE MANDATORY. SOME MINISTERS, HOWEVER, ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO GO, AND QUESTION IS ONLY ONE OF TIME. IN THIS CATEGORY WE WOULD PUT MINISTER OF HEALTH SHEIKHOLESLAMZADEH AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE KHOSROWSHAHI. DEPARTURE OF MINISTER OF INFORMATION HOMAYOUN AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR NASR-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 05045 02 OF 02 260647Z

ESFAHANI ARE MUCH LESS LIKELY. OTHER CANDIDATES FOR DEPARTURE WHOSE NAMES HAVE APPEARED AT LEAST ONCE IN RUMORS ARE MINISTER OF JUSTICE KIANPUR, MINISTER OF EDUCATION GANJI, MINISTER OF HOUSING TOWFIQ, AND EVEN FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY (VICE ZAHEDI). OF THESE,

ONLY ONE EMBASSY WOULD CURRENTLY PUT IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
CATEGORY WOULD BE MINISTER OF JUSTICE KIANPUR, WHO MIGHT
BE FORCED TO WALK THE PLANK IF SHAH DECIDED TO MAKE WHOLE-
SALE SHIFT ON THE INTERNAL SCENE.

8. WHILE MOST OF FOREGOING COMES FROM RUMOR MILL, THERE
ARE CONSISTENT HINTS FROM VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES THAT
AT LEAST SOME CHANGES ARE PLANNED. ABOVE OFFERED AS
SPECULATION WHICH IS CURRENT HERE.
SULLIVAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, REORGANIZATIONS, MINISTERS (DIPLOMATS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TEHRAN05045
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780222-0539
Format: TEL
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780517/aaaaaocm.tel
Line Count: 180
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e0713096-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2560517
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RUMORED MINISTERIAL CHANGES SUMMARY: NUMBER OF STORIES SUGGEST SEVERAL MINISTERS WILL BE CHANGED WITHIN NEXT TWO MONTHS. MORE VAGUE RUMORS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e0713096-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014